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May 19, 2020

His Excellency Madjid Bouguerra

The Ambassador of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria to the United States of America

2118 Kalorama Road NW

Washington, D.C. 20008

Your Excellency:

I am writing to you as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee and an unwavering supporter of multilateral institutions, including the World Health Organization (WHO). In Congress, I have always championed foreign assistance, and I fully endorse U.S. cooperation with the WHO and our international partners in fighting AIDS, Malaria, Tuberculosis, and other global health threats.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, however, I am concerned about continued personal and institutional credibility of the WHO's leadership. To ensure that the WHO continues to be a reliable partner for all member states in supporting global health initiatives, it is imperative that the WHO holds member states accountable to their obligations under the WHO's own International Health Regulations (IHR).

I write today to ask for your country's support within the WHO to get the full cooperation of the People's Republic of China in these efforts. Nearly six months after the first reported outbreak of COVID-19 in China, WHO experts still do not have access to the critical information the world needs not only to fight this pandemic, but to reinforce the WHO protocols for fighting all future pandemics.

I respectfully ask that your nation's representative to the WHO ask the WHO's leadership the following questions:

- Why did the WHO's leadership not publicly acknowledge that the Chinese Government has never allowed its experts access to the earliest known virus samples in Wuhan?

- Why did the WHO's leadership not publicly acknowledge that the Chinese Government has refused repeated WHO requests, as recently as February of this year, to have access to viral isolate, clinical specimens, and all other pertinent information?
- What reasons did the Chinese Government provide the WHO for refusing the requested access?
- Why does the WHO's leadership not publicly acknowledge that the Chinese Government is censoring its own research on COVID-19, silencing medical researchers and doctors, including doctors Li Wenliang, Ai Fen, Zhang Jixian, Zhong Yangzhen, and shutting down labs, such as Shanghai Public Health Clinic Center, which posted the first genetic sequencing of the virus online.
- Why did the WHO's leadership wait until March 11 to declare COVID-19 a pandemic?
- Was the WHO pressured by the Chinese government to delay declaring COVID-19 a pandemic?
- Why did the WHO's leadership explicitly criticize travel restrictions in some countries, such as the U.S. but not in China's Hubei province and the city of Wuhan?
- Why did the WHO's leadership not speak out publicly about the racial discrimination encountered by the citizens of several African WHO member states in China during that country's response to the pandemic?

Global confidence in the WHO and its leadership is critical to continue to respond effectively to this pandemic and future global health threats. All other WHO member states should share my concerns that the politicization of a pandemic and undue influence that one member state – China – has exerted on the WHO leadership make it harder for us to work effectively. To date, more than 4 million people globally have been infected with the virus and nearly 300,000 have died. The WHO leadership has an obligation to be transparent and accountable to all of its members and your help in advancing this goal is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to my staff at 202-225-4511. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



M.C.

Congressman Will Hurd
Member of Congress